FIRST COMICS
NOV. $1.25
NO. 10
$1.60 CANADA
MARS
ALSO IN THIS ISSUE!
DYNAMO JOE

%FIRST COMICS,
1014 DAVIS STREET, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

READ LETTERS

As you've noticed from our cover-blurb, **Dynamo Joe** *makes its premiere this month as First's first mini-series ... and, quite possibly, as comics' first advertised back-up mini-series. We've got big plans for the Big Man, and we're sure you'll enjoy this preview.*

Now, on to the mail.

Dear Mr. Gold,

An intriguing theological possibility. What if Judgement Day came to Earth but not everyone was there? What if God, through chance or design, overlooked those last few souls? What if, after it was all over, God, and even Satan, left the lifeless Earth and whatever negligible life there might have been on the other planets of the solar system?

What would be left? An ancient, dried-up planet with a few ancient, dried-up lesser gods. Perhaps one or two that barely had that last fragment of energy might immigrate to Mars, to wait and pray (if gods pray) for worshippers.

What if one of these gods planned in advance? What if one reached out to find a few followers that might survive Judgement Day? What if one of those follwers did survive? What if that follower was Milos?

So who or what is this last god? What is its name? It probably doesn't matter. It must have had many names through history and before. But perhaps the most intriguing question is this: is this god good, is it evil, or is it simply doing whatever it must to survive?

Speculative religion. I am fascinated, gentlemen.

John Henry Sain
2251 Kings Highway
Medford, Oregon 97501

Dear Marc and Mark —

Mars #6 was welcome relief because for months I've been on the brink of forever turning my back on Morgana Trace.

My initial reaction to Mars #1 could be summed up in one word: "Gee." I found it hard to believe that two artists bent on gainful employment could convince a comic publishing company bent on making money that this kind of art was profitable. Don't know how the Marx of Excellence did it, but if you could bottle that kind of persuasion, I'll take a case when raise time comes.

My only beef back then was the hype that it was a science fiction comic. Sure, it isn't the standard space opera fare the comics publishers pass off as SF, but it reads more like a philosophical fantasy. Minor bitch.

Anyway, I gladly picked up #2. Then #3. Then #4. By issue 5, the doubts started. That delicious "big food" art grew more and more appealing, but it looked like you guys lost your creative rudder with Morgana bumbling from one inexplicable phenomenon to the next.

My patience — and my wallet — was wearing thin. Temptation to cancel loomed.

Then Faith came. And faith returned.

This issue showed you guys either had a firm hand at the helm all the time, or just happened to find it this issue just before the ship foundered.

Of course, we're still left in the lurch not knowing where Teezy is, where Fawn is, where Fawn came from, why Norm Rockwell thinks the Red Planet is a nudist colony or how Milos got control of those animated artichokes.

All answered next issue, right?

Doug Tallman
425 Market Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Although by now some of your questions have been answered, Mars is a big place and if we revealed everything

all in one story, we'd be doing a graphic novel and not a comic book.

Dear Mars Crew,

Mars #6 was your best issue so far, and one of the most original and satisfying comics I've read in some time. Mars is exactly the kind of comic I'm looking for. So many comics seem laden with copy-heavy captions and superfluous word balloons, redundantly explaining what the pictures should be quite simply showing.

Alex Toth is one of my all-time favorite artist/writers. He knows how to create fun, fast-paced, intelligent comics without any excess baggage. Hempel and Wheatley are doing the same with Mars. Simple, clean, entertaining, inventive comics.

Better still, Mars is about people. The characters are the story. How often have you read a comic where the action is the star of the book? How often has a so-called "plot" been nothing more than an excuse to manipulate boring pyrotechnics, totally devoid of any semblance of story or human substance?

We've been Star Wars-ed to death. I've had it with galactic battles and grand schemes to either save or destroy the universe. It's time to get back to the basics and do what comics do best: tell stories about people.

Mark Burbey
P.O. Box 61671
San Francisco, CA 94101

JUST ENOUGH SPACE to tell you we've got the penultimate stories in the present **Mars** and **Dynamo Joe** sagas in the on-deck circle for next issue. We'll see you then.

— Mike Gold

Rick Obadiah, Publisher

Mike Gold, Managing Editor
Joe Staton, Art Director
Rick Oliver, Associate Editor
Alex Wald, Production Coordinator

Ralph C. Musicant, Operations Director
Kathy Kotsivas, Direct Sales Manager

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A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION

LOOK AT US, LORD MILOS-- WE ARE FAILURES! GOD HAS CHOSEN HIS WARRIORS CARELESSLY!
I ENVY YOU YOUR DEATH.
GOD CAN EXPECT NOTHING MORE OF YOU, NOW.

BUT I STILL LIVE TO FULFILL MY OBLIGATION.
AND IF I SUCCEED...
...THEN YOUR DEATH WILL NOT HAVE BEEN IN VAIN.
I CANNOT ALLOW THE EARTH PEOPLE TO DO THIS TO US AGAIN!
YOU CHARGED ME WITH CAPTURING THE RED HAIRED FEMALE.
I WILL HONOR THAT CHARGE... AND SOMEHOW I WILL DELIVER HER TO GOD!
2

NO RUST (JUST REALITY)

by

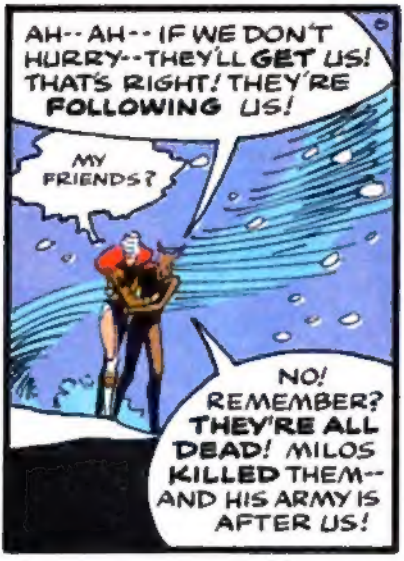
MARC HEMPEL

and

MARK WHEATLEY

LETTERING & COLORING ASSISTED BY KATHRYN MAYER

EDITED BY MIKE GOLD


AH--AH--IF WE DON'T HURRY--THEY'LL GET US! THAT'S RIGHT! THEY'RE FOLLOWING US!
MY FRIENDS?
NO! REMEMBER? THEY'RE ALL DEAD! MILOS KILLED THEM--AND HIS ARMY IS AFTER US!

VANESSA? WHERE DID YOU GET THAT FUR COAT? IT'S SO COLD HERE...
CHATTER CHATTER

VANESSA?! WHERE?
OH.

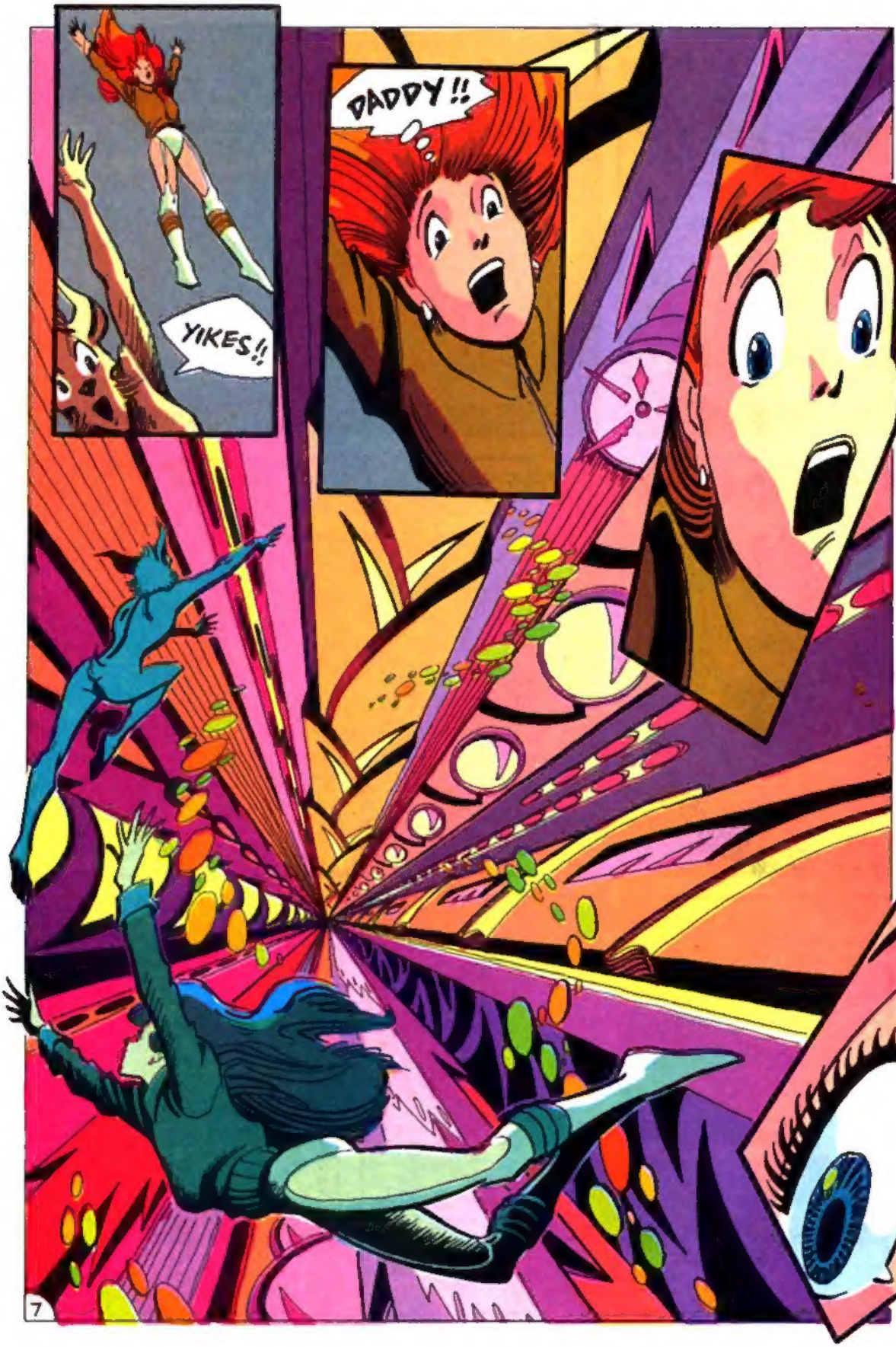
SEE WHERE WE ARE, MORGANA? LOOK!
ICE! WE'RE ALMOST HOME!
4

HOME? DADDY? WHERE ARE YOU... DADDY?
I MUST'VE BROKE HER... GOD MIGHT NOT WANT HER IF SHE'S BROKE.

DADDY, YOU SAID WE LIVE AFTER WE DIE--SO WHERE ARE YOU--DADDY?
I BROKE HER... I JUST KNOW I DID...

AM I DEAD NOW, DADDY?
I DON'T FEEL SO COLD ANYMORE...
LOOK-- UNDER THE ICE! BEAUTIFUL THINGS!
NO, MORGANA! WE DON'T WANT TO GO THAT WAY!
WATCH ME ICE SKATE, DADDY.
OOPS!
OUCH!
WHAT AM I DOING HERE? HEY-- THIS ISN'T ICE! IT'S WARM!
WARM??
YEAH!
IT'S WARM-- SPONGY AND SMOOTH AS GLASS--EXCEPT FOR THAT...
5

LOOKS LIKE A METEOR SCORED THE SURFACE...
...BUT THAT SURE ISN'T A METEOR!
IT'S GOR-GEOUS!
YIKES!
SPLOOP!
FAWN!
=MUM-RUMPH!=
SPLUPE!
=MURUMP!=
SPLOOP!
BLOOP!
6


YIKES!!
DADDY!!

BONK!
!
PLUMP!
WHOA!
WE CAN'T HAVE THIS!
SCUTTLE SCUTTLE
RUB RUB
POLISH
WE JUST DON'T GO FALLING ON THE MACHINES!
WE DON'T TOUCH THE MACHINES!
?
PRETTY THINGS!
WHOA AGAIN! STILL HERE, ARE WE? I'M GOING ODD-- I KNOW I AM!
8

FIRST NOTES

MANDATORY EXPLANATION

I remember back in the early 1960's when comics first raised their price. I was at my local drug store, flipping through the racks and I saw that 12¢ price for the first time. It was on one of Mort Weisinger's Superman family books — Jimmy Olsen or Superboy, I think.

I stared at that 12¢ sticker for a long time. Buying the book wasn't the problem; I felt that the publisher somehow betrayed my trust. Of course, I was about eleven at the time.

It took the comics industry nearly 30 years to initiate that first 20% increase. Previously, to stave off any increase, publishers had to reduce costs. comics started out at 64 interior pages, within twenty years that count was cut in half. And advertising pages increased dramatically during that same period.

I do not want to apologize for our price increase — I regret it and I wish it wasn't necessary, but it is. In 1933, comic books and *Newsweek* magazine both premiered at a 10¢ cover price. 51 years later, *Newsweek* costs $1.75 and First Comics cost $1.25. I figure we're still ahead of the game; if you're on a tight budget you probably don't share my opinion. I guess I apologize after all.

This is not to say that we're not giving you more for your money — we can now afford to standardize some things we've been experimenting with over the past several months.

We've switched to offset, and we're using a whiter stock of paper and, more importantly, we are using much finer line screens in preparing our printing plates. We're using deeper, richer colors so we are able to give you the quality of the higher-priced comics without charging $1.50 or $1.75 for them. And we're using heavier cover stock as well.

We are indeed making a bit more off of each copy we sell — that's the idea — but so are a whole bunch of other people the writers and artists, whose royalties are set at a percentage of our cover price; the retailer who sold you this comic, the distributor who sold him this comic. These people aren't IBM, they're small businessmen and women who have to struggle a bit in order to produce or sell you these comics. We here at First Comics are in the same boat.

When it came time for us to raise our price, we considered every possible option. We could have lowered our story page count from 28 to 23 — the same the Big Guys generally give you. We could have switched to the same type of cheap newsprint you find on most comic books sold in America today. We could have switched to the cheaper color separations used in most comics published today.

But we did not want to lower the quality of our comics — production means a lot around here, and we want the published product to look as much like the original art as possible — without having to charge an arm and a leg.

We need your support, you know that. First will be continuing to introduce new titles and new concepts — you've

probably read about some of them in the fanzines already. We've got **Dynamo Joe** in a preview / premiere / mini-series starting this month in **Mars**. We've got our first full-book mini-series starting off in September. We've got an entirely new superhero concept scheduled for March of next year ... and some more immediate plans you probably know all about as well.

And we thank you — deeply — for the support you've already given us.

— Mike Gold

FIRST IN JULY

American Flagg! #14 — **Howard Chaykin** and guest-artists **Pat Broderick** and **Rick Burchett** get Reuben in over his head again in a tale of blackmail and wedding bells — "Order in the Court!"

E-Man #20 — While **Joe Staton** and **Rick Burchett** have Mike Mauser off hunting Hollywood ghosts, E-Man has his hands full of ... H.E.R.B? And wait 'till you meet the Golden Gopher!

Grimjack #4 — Rock and roll may live forever, but rock stars aren't so lucky — and when Grimjack is hired to protect an old friend, he's got more than just his hands full! **John Ostrander** and **Timothy Truman** provide the chills!

Jon Sable, Freelance #18 — Jon's got to make it to the Los Angeles Olympics in time ... if he can make it out of Idaho alive! The exciting conclusion to **Mike Grell's** two-part thriller!

Mars #10 — Is Morgana Earth's sole survivor? And who is Moot the Caretaker? **Mark Wheatley** and **Marc Hempel** let us in on the secret ... as **Doug Rice** and **John Ostrander** give you the first look at the one true hero of our future, **Dynamo Joe!**

Starslayer #22 — Torin and company find the legendary Golden Moby, but their discovery may wrench them back to the beginning of time! **Ostrander, Truman** and **Hilary Barta** tell us the tale ... as **Peter Gillis, Tom Sutton** and **Don Lomax** thrust the Black Flame into the clutches of ... Hellequin!

THE AIR RINGS WITH THE SOUND OF CHIMES AS FAWN GRABS AT HER BAUBLES.
NOW, WHY WOULD I WANT HER TO DO THAT?
THEY SHINE-- AH-- AND THEY MOVE...TWO OF FAWN'S FAVORITE THINGS!
FAWN, IS IT?! I'VE NEVER CALLED ANYTHING FAWN! I DON'T KNOW WHY I'D START NOW!
WELL-- YOU SHOULD CALL HER FAWN BECAUSE THAT'S HER NAME!
AND JUST WHO ARE YOU?
ME?! WHY, I'M MOOT! THE CARETAKER! I'M...
WHOA! WHO ARE YOU TO ASK ME THE QUESTIONS?
NOW WAIT A MINUTE! I'M STARTING TO REALLY NOTICE YOU TWO!
THIS ISN'T RIGHT AT ALL--THOUGH IT DOES HAVE A CERTAIN CHARM, BUT--
NO.
9

LOOK--I'M AFRAID I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU AT ALL. I'LL GET MY FRIEND AND WE'LL LEAVE IF YOU'LL JUST SHOW US THE WAY OUT.
OUT! OUT?! BUT THERE IS NO OUT! ONLY HERE AND ME!
OH--OH YES... MY FEELINGS EXACTLY!
FAWN! WE'RE LEAVING!
WHOA! I MEAN WHOA! I TOLD YOU I DON'T CALL ANYTHING FAWN! I GOT A SISTER WHO MIGHT CALL HER FAWN, BUT NOT ME!
YOU GOT THAT?!
AND THERE IS NO OUT!
EXCEPT OUT OF YOUR HEAD...
OH DAMN! SHE'S GONE!
10
WELL, BY GOLLY--SHE IS GONE.
I'M REALLY GOING ODD. I DIDN'T WANT TO GET RID OF HER...JUST WANTED TO NAME HER DIFFERENT!
AND SHE LEFT A TRAIL OF THOSE DIAMONDS...

THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT SHE'LL GET INTO...
I'VE GOT TO FIND FAWN.
WHOA! I'M NOT LETTING YOU GO, TOO!
I SAID WHOA!! YOU HEAR ME?!
THIS PLACE... WE FELL THROUGH THAT ICE-STUFF TO GET HERE--BUT THAT'S SKY UP THERE.
WHOA! WHOA! STOP! WHOA!
11

SCUTTLE SCUTTLE
WHOA!
SCUTTLE
SCUTTLE!
NO!
ATCH!
WUNK!
WHY IS SHE HIDING?
SCRAPE
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
12

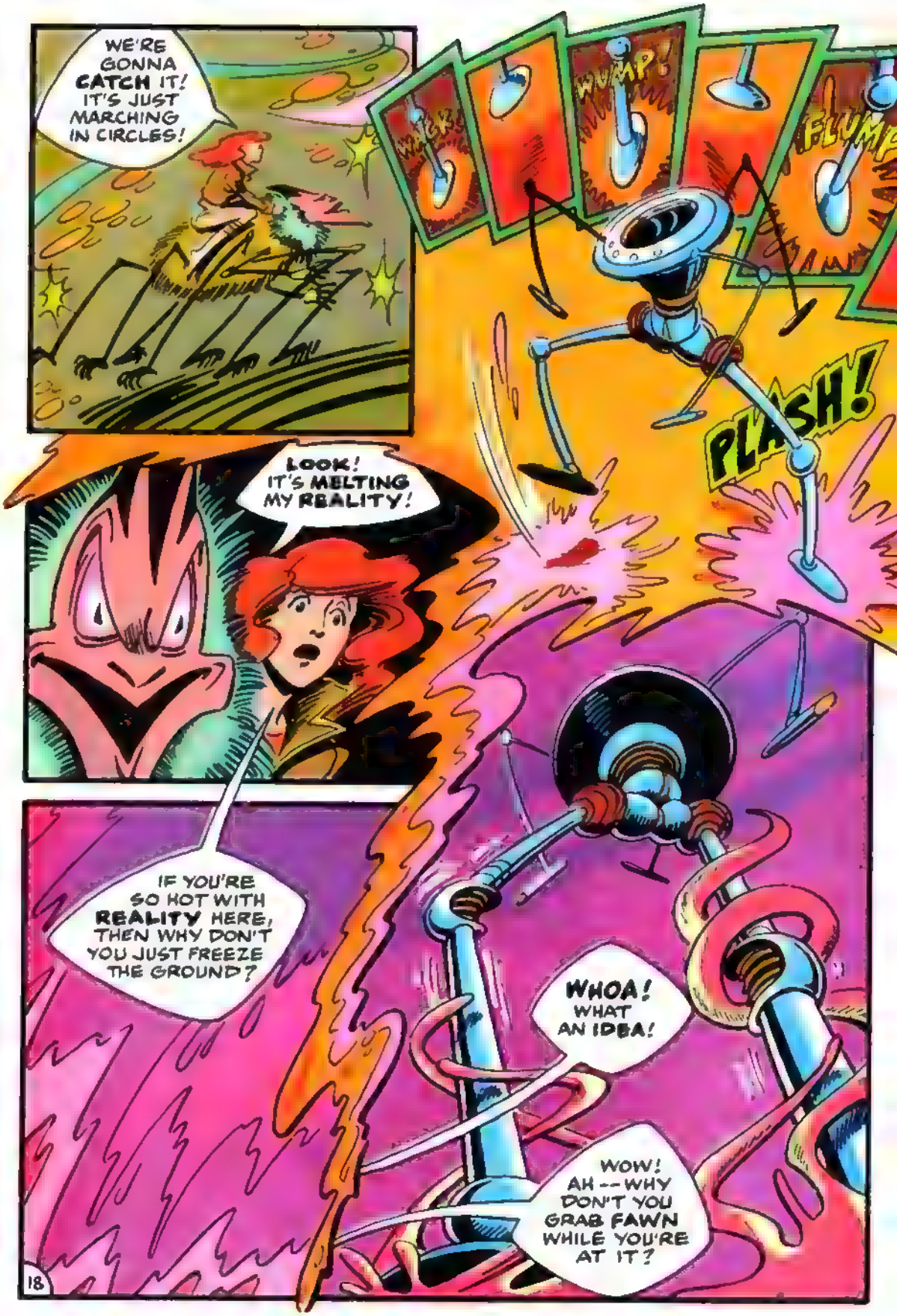
WHY DON'T THEY DO WHAT I WANT?!
WHY DO THEY KEEP SURPRISING ME?
YOU'RE NOT HURTING ANYTHING IN THERE, ARE YOU?
NO... BUT I WILL! YEAH!
GO AWAY OR I'LL HURT YOUR MACHINE!!
NO!
I'LL BASH IT AND I'LL SMASH IT AND--
SCUTTLE SCUTTLE
NO!
SCUTTLE
HONK!
OUCH!
WHOA! I'M GOING ODD! I AM! WHAT AM I DOING?
FIRST I CAN'T CONTROL THESE CREATURES... AND NEXT--> UNGH!
AHH! I COULD'VE HURT THE MACHINE MYSELF!
POP!
13

I REALLY DON'T WANT TO HURT YOUR MACHINE.
LET ME OUT, AND I'LL JUST FIND MY FRIEND AND GET OUT OF YOUR WAY.
COMING HERE WAS A MISTAKE.
YOU'RE TELLING ME! WHY I EVER PRODUCED SOMETHING LIKE YOU I'LL NEVER KNOW!
ARE YOU SAYING THAT YOU BROUGHT US HERE?
WHOA! BROUGHT YOU HERE? I MADE YOU HERE!
THIS IS MY REALITY AND IT'S PAST TIME YOU LEARNED THAT. YOU'RE JUST A SMALL PART OF IT!
SO, I GUESS THAT MAKES ME A FIGMENT OF YOUR IMAGINATION?
ISN'T EVERYTHING?
CRASH!
WHOA!! NOW WHAT?
HE'S GONE.

WHAM!
CREAK!
REEEK!
WUMPH!
WAMPT!
ALL THESE YEARS! I'VE KEPT MY MACHINES SO PERFECT!
I'VE NEVER ALLOWED THEM TO RUST--NO SCRATCHES OR DENTS...
I MUST'VE SECRETLY HATED THEM TO BE DOING THIS NOW!
15

COME ON! YOU'RE NOT DOING THIS... BUT I CAN GUESS WHO IS!
YIKES!
CRASH!
"FAWN'S FINALLY STOLEN SOMETHING TOO BIG TO HANDLE!"
HELP!!
CRUNCH!
HEY-- LISTEN!
ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?
KERANG!
WHY SHOULD I?
IS THAT MACHINE YOURS?
OF COURSE!
THEN, C'MON! WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO FIGURE SOME WAY TO STOP IT AND GET FAWN!
?

AH... MOOT, JUST WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
MAINTENANCE! I KEEP THE MACHINES THAT MAINTAIN THE WORLD.
OR AT LEAST I USED TO...
MY SISTER ONLY CALLS FOR LITTLE THINGS--AND MY BROTHERS NEVER CALL ANYMORE.
IS THAT YOUR FAMILY? THEY'RE HUMAN.
"NOPE! JUST THOUGHT IT WAS WEIRD TO MAKE 'EM LOOK LIKE YOU."
"THERE WERE EIGHT OF US--AND FOR AGES WE WORKED BEAUTIFULLY FOR THE MASTERS. EACH OF US HAD A JOB--AND YOU COULD COUNT ON US TO DO IT."
"AND THEN--A LONG WHILE BACK--DISASTER STRUCK! ALL I KNOW ABOUT IT IS THAT I WAS CUT OFF FROM THE REST OF THE FAMILY. THERE WASN'T ANY MORE NEED FOR MY MACHINES."
"BUT I KNOW THAT SOMEDAY THINGS WILL WORK AGAIN. I'VE BEEN TALKING WITH MY SISTER OCCASIONALLY--AND SHE'S TOLD ME THAT IF NOT FOR CRAZY BROTHER DRANG, WE'D BE A FAMILY AGAIN ALREADY!"


WE'RE GONNA CATCH IT! IT'S JUST MARCHING IN CIRCLES!
WUMP!
FLUMP!
PLASH!
LOOK! IT'S MELTING MY REALITY!
IF YOU'RE SO HOT WITH REALITY HERE, THEN WHY DON'T YOU JUST FREEZE THE GROUND?
WHOA! WHAT AN IDEA!
WOW! AH -- WHY DON'T YOU GRAB FAWN WHILE YOU'RE AT IT?

YIKES!
MY PRETTY DIAMONDS!
WELL, THAT'S IT! NO MORE REALITY PLAY FOR ME! I ALMOST DESTROYED MY BEAUTIFUL MACHINES!
AND WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, MOOT AND HIS ODD REALITY FADE...
WAIT!!
GEEZ -- WHAT A MESS... NO WONDER MOOT KEPT IT DRESSED UP.
GO! NO MORE REALITY GAMES! WHY DON'T YOU GO?!
BECAUSE WE'RE AS REAL AS YOUR MACHINES! NOW PLEASE GET US OUT OF HERE!!
19

LATER...
THIS USUALLY TRANSPORTS SMALL MACHINES TO MY SISTER. IT SHOULD HANDLE THE TWO OF YOU.
PLEASE ASK MY SISTER TO SEND WORD OF THE WORLD...
...SHE'S MY ONLY CONTACT WITH REALITY...
WOOOOSH!
ALONE AGAIN, MOOT TURNS TO VIEW HIS UN-ADORNED WAREHOUSE...
WHOA!
THIS IS GONNA TAKE HUNDREDS OF YEARS TO CLEAN UP...
SCUTTLE
SCUTTLE
AH!
YES! RED HAIR!
SNIF
SOON I WILL HAVE HER!
NEXT ISSUE:
WHEN THE DEAD WALK AND THE LIVING DON'T!
20

IT IS THE EIGHTH YEAR OF THE ORION WAR, AND FOR THE ALLIANCE, THINGS HAVE BEEN BETTER

DYNAMO JOE

FIREBALLS INCOMING!

SHWUMP!

HELLIONS ALOFT, GET TO YOUR MOTHERSHIP! 7TH TEXAS CAVALRY, WHERE ARE YOU?

ARTIST/CREATOR - DOUG RICE
WRITER - JOHN OSTRANDER
LETTERER/COLORIST - RICK TAYLOR
EDITOR - MIKE GOLD

retreat from FERGUSSON

TRANSPORT DOWN BY THE SAND SEA, GENERAL IPPOLITOV. SEARCH AND RETRIEVE.

NYET! NO TIME!

LEAVE EQUIPMENT! ALL PERSONNEL MUST BOARD TRANSPORTS! NOW!

GETTING BOGIES ON THE HORIZON, FIELD MARSHALL!

THIS STAGING AREA'S GONNA BE OVER-RUN IN LESS THAN AN HOUR!

SCAPEGOAT IN FOUR COLORS PART 3

by CHARLES MEYERSON

THE COMICS CODE Authority? That little seal in the upper right-hand or left-hand corner of most newsstand comics?

Eric Olson said he'd never heard of it. You might find that surprising, considering he's the magazine buyer in charge of comics for the Chas. Levy Circulation Company, maybe the biggest magazine-distribution concern in the nation.

Levy delivers about three million comic books a year to Chicago-area retailers. But as far as Olson knows, no one in the country pays attention to that little seal.

That's not surprising to the man who administered the Comics Code for more than 20 years. Leonard Darvin, who describes himself as "an old retired guy" still serving as lawyer for the Comics Magazine Association of America (CMAA), which created the Code.

"CHARLES LEVY," Darvin says, "certainly was one of the wholesalers that had a great deal of trouble with the opposition to comics published in some measure — most comics were OK even then — in 1952 and 1953.

"Of course, times have changed. They had a change in personnel, they've had no difficulty with comics. They assume the Code is sort of built-in, without even thinking about it."

Times have changed, indeed. Thirty publishers origir ally held membership in the CMAA, now there are three — Marvel, DC and Archie — along with their three national distributors, and World Color Press and Chemical Color Plate.

In the summer of 1979, the CMAA turned over its management to a time-sharing firm, Trade Group Associates, which also handles work for organizations representing hardware manufacturers and women in publishing.

Dudley Waldner, who followed Darvin as Code Administrator, oversees two reviewers charged with checking every page of books published under the Code.

ONCE, THE CODE AUTHORITY kept watch for anything less wholesome than Nancy Drew mysteries, now, because the Code and the times have changed, the Authority allows material considerably more risque.

— Despite a Code requirement that women be "drawn realistically, without undue emphasis on any physical quality," you don't have to look through too many Code-approved comics to find at least a couple of qualities unduly emphasized.

— Despite a ban on portrayal of "illicit sex relations," stories involving extramarital sex appeared under the Code last year.

— Despite the prohibition of "gruesome illustrations," another Code-approved book showed a boy about to explode in the vacuum of space.

NONE OF THAT is likely to have much impact on a generation of kids exposed to contemporary TV and radio. As DC Comics Executive Editor Dick Giordano explains, "Almost any other medium displays far more explicit violence, sex, nudity and language than we do.

"You don't have to go very far to be able to see things much stronger than the

strongest comic books and far more negative than the most negative comic books."

Under the direct-sales system, publishers now can reach a growing audience without having to satisfy distributors and retailers who once insisted the Code approve all books. Marvel and DC are expanding their direct-sales lines — which do not go through the Code Authority.

Direct-sales versions of Marvel's regular newsstand comics do not carry the Code seal, even though they have earned it.

IF DISTRIBUTORS AREN'T watching to see whether books pass the Comics Code, if the Code Authority itself is a "shell of its former self," in Giordano's words, if publishers have an efficient means to sidestep the Code, then why bother with it?

"That's a good question," Giordano says. "We haven't answered that yet, internally. I guess maybe 'old habits die hard' is the best reason I can think of.

"We recognize that the Code as it now functions probably doesn't serve any real, worthwhile advantage — with the possible exception of having us be able to say to parents that we pass material through the Code without really telling them what that means." Code Administrator Waldner points out that the CMAA aggressively publicizes the Code, distributing free copies to parents, teachers and librarians.

Darvin says the Code is important to the industry. Referring to the 1971 decision allowing comics to deal with the problem of narcotics, Darvin says the beauty of the Code is that if it is not doing the job, the industry can change it. "They themselves made the change, and they can make it again, if time comes along that it should be made.

"But just to throw it out the window and not have any restraint will cause difficulties."

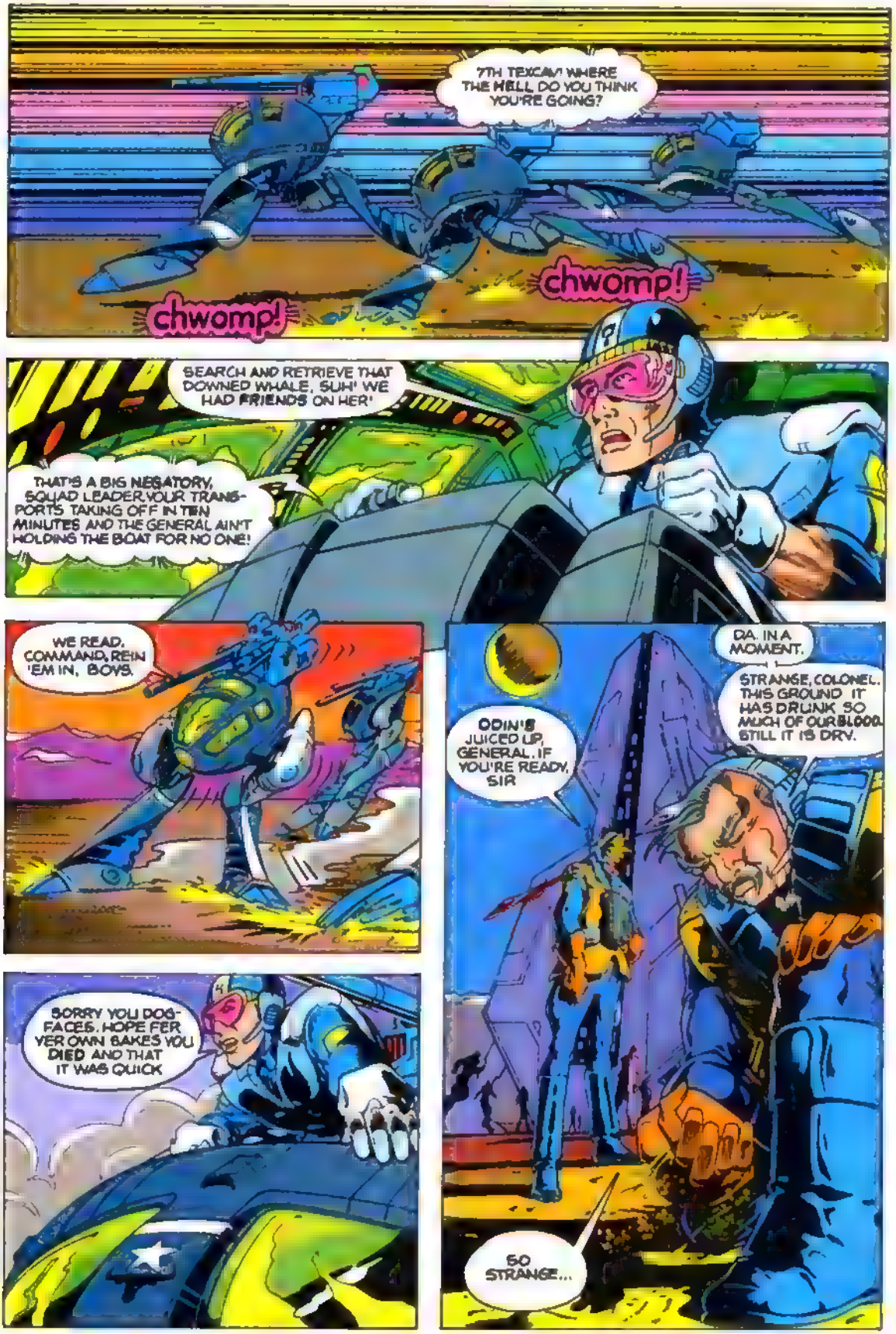
IN COMICS SHOPS across the country, Code-approved books are sold side-by-side with direct-sales comics without any external restraint.

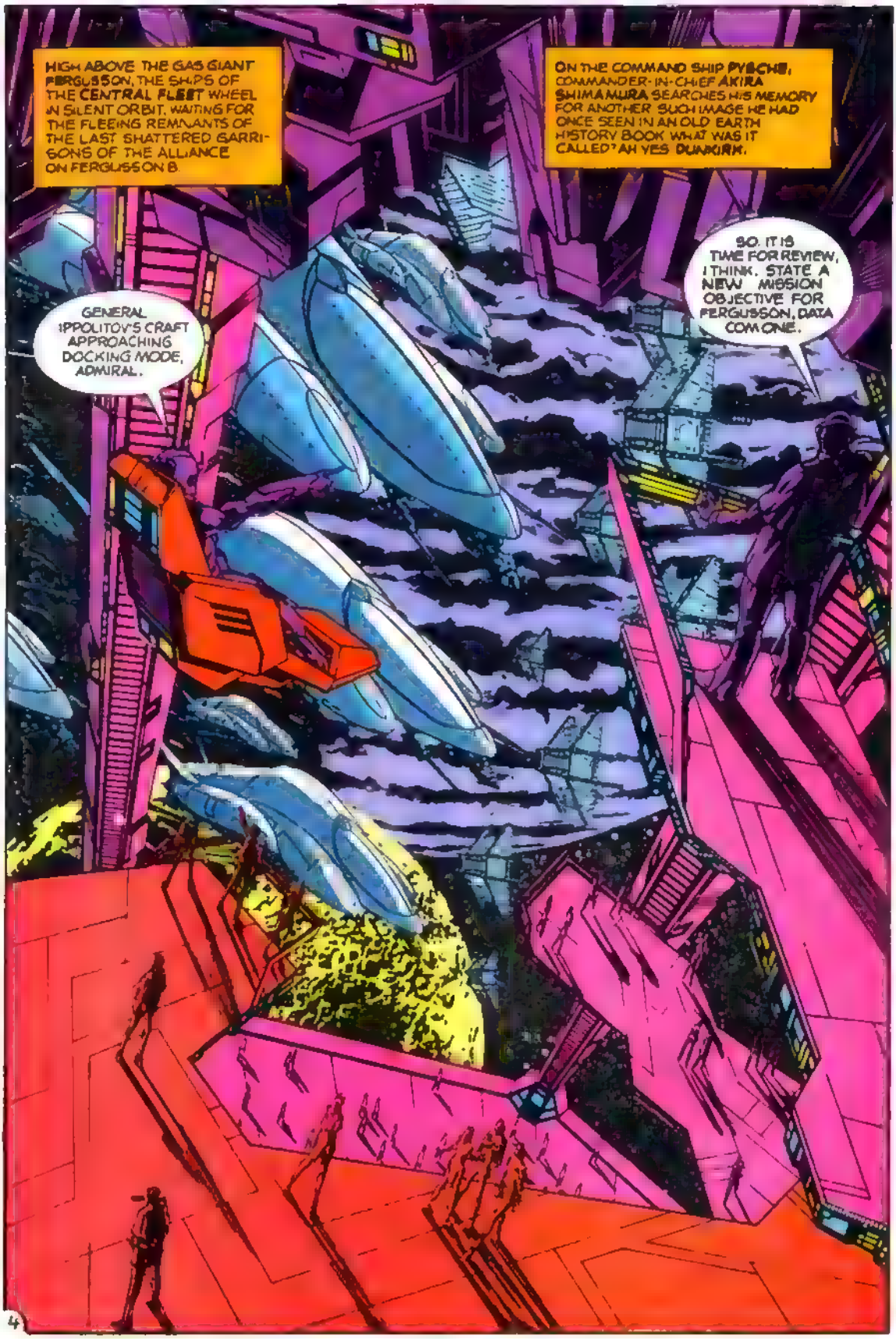
Darvin recommends "these new fellows ... use legitimate material (because) even though the market today — especially in these comic book stores — basically caters to the teenagers, they're still basically children's publications.

"It isn't a question of being blue-nosed about it, it's a question of what you're selling. Just as prime-time television can not have sexual intercourse on the air — you try it on prime time and you're going to knock off television — you try certain things in comic books and you're going to knock off the comic book industry, whether it consists of the traditional publishers or the new ones."

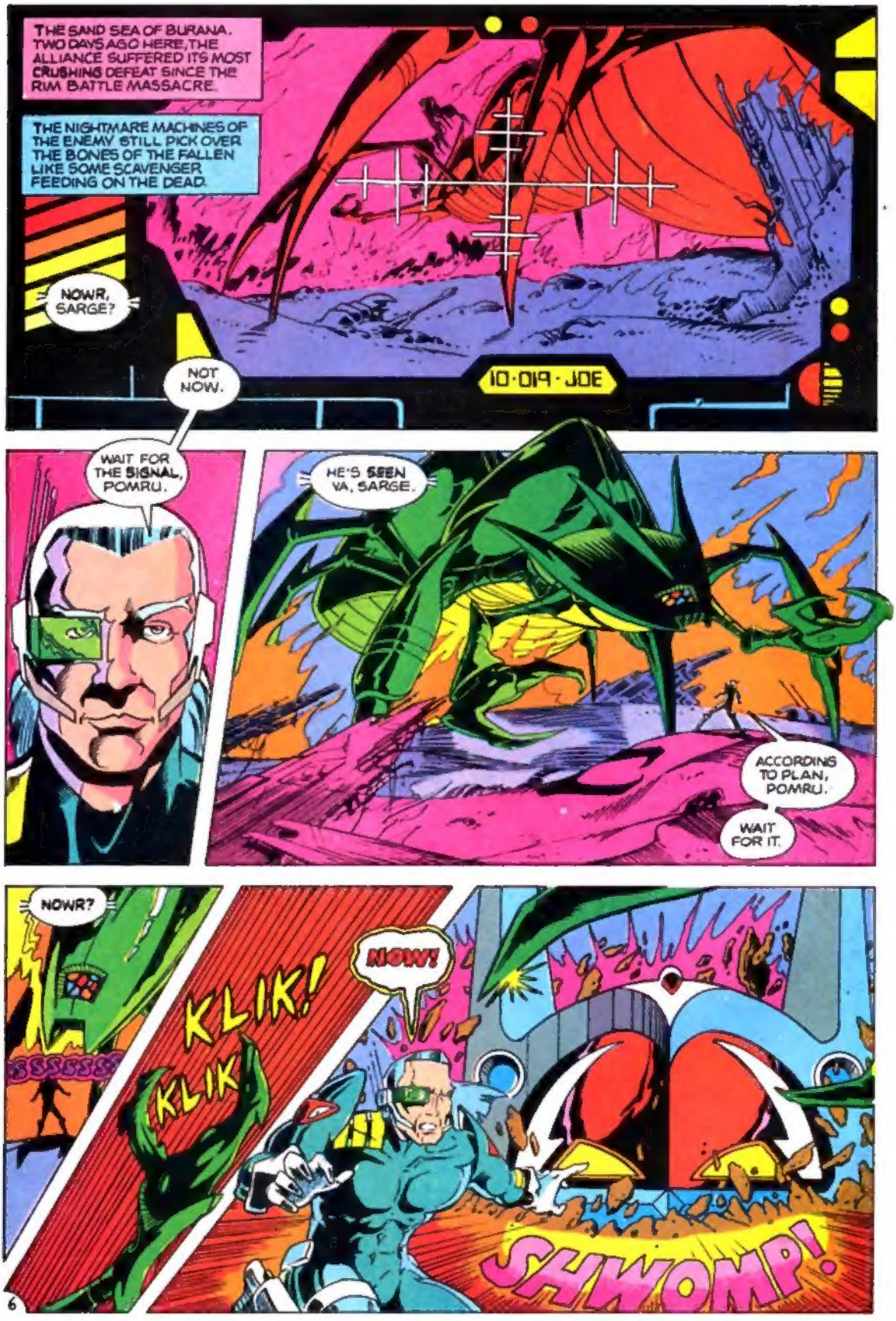
NEXT TIME: What publishers are doing to prevent the industry from being "knocked off."

(Charlie, who reports weekday mornings on WXRT (93.1 FM) in Chicago, recommends you read Dr. Seuss' latest work, *The Butter Battle Book*, before it's too late.)

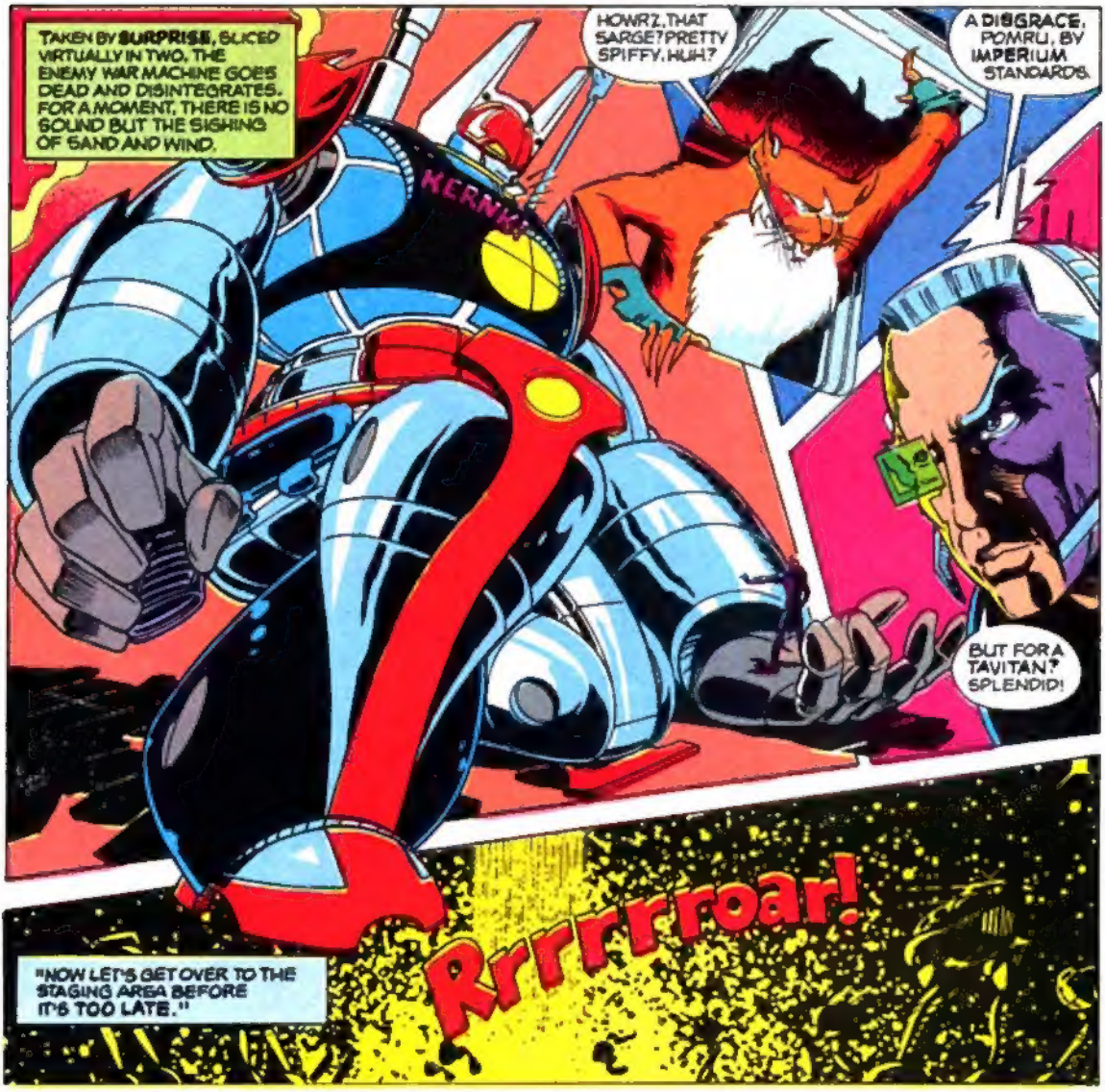

7TH TEXCAV! WHERE THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?
chwomp!
chwomp!
SEARCH AND RETRIEVE THAT DOWNED WHALE, SUH! WE HAD FRIENDS ON HER!
THAT'S A BIG NEGATORY, SQUAD LEADER. YOUR TRANSPORTS TAKING OFF IN TEN MINUTES AND THE GENERAL AIN'T HOLDING THE BOAT FOR NO ONE!
WE READ. COMMAND, REIN 'EM IN, BOYS.
DA. IN A MOMENT.
STRANGE, COLONEL. THIS GROUND IT HAS DRUNK SO MUCH OF OUR BLOOD. STILL IT IS DRY.
ODIN'S JUICED UP, GENERAL. IF YOU'RE READY, SIR
SORRY YOU DOG-FACES. HOPE FER YER OWN BAKES YOU DIED AND THAT IT WAS QUICK
SO STRANGE...


HIGH ABOVE THE GAS GIANT FERGUSSON, THE SHIPS OF THE CENTRAL FLEET WHEEL IN SILENT ORBIT, WAITING FOR THE FLEEING REMNANTS OF THE LAST SHATTERED GARRISONS OF THE ALLIANCE ON FERGUSSON B.
ON THE COMMAND SHIP PSYCHE, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AKIRA SHIMAMURA SEARCHES HIS MEMORY FOR ANOTHER SUCH IMAGE HE HAD ONCE SEEN IN AN OLD EARTH HISTORY BOOK WHAT WAS IT CALLED? AH YES DUNKIRK.
GENERAL IPPOLITOV'S CRAFT APPROACHING DOCKING MODE, ADMIRAL.
SO. IT IS TIME FOR REVIEW, I THINK. STATE A NEW MISSION OBJECTIVE FOR FERGUSSON, DATA COM ONE.

PURPOSE: TO BLOW OR CONTAIN THE ADVANCE OF THE ENEMY UTILIZING THE GAS-GIANT FERGUSSON AND ITS 8 MOONS. DEFENSE MADE POSSIBLE BY ENEMY'S OBSESSIVE STRAIGHT-LINE ADVANCE.
EACH MOON WAS FORTIFIED AND, AS IT SWUNG BEHIND FERGUSSON AND AWAY FROM THE FOE, THE MOON COULD BE RE-BUILT, RE-MODIFIED, EVEN SLIPPED INTO ANOTHER ORBIT.
FOR THREE YEARS, THE DEFENSES HAVE HELD...
NOW, THEY HAVE FAILED.
YOUR TACTICS WERE BRILLIANT, SERGEI; YOUR MISSION A SUCCESS. NO OTHER COULD HAVE DONE WELL SO LONG.
DA. AM GENIUS.
IF WE HAD BUT ONE CLUE TO WHO OR WHAT THIS ENEMY IS... WHAT THEY WANT...!
WE MUST MAKE DO WITH WHAT WE ARE GIVEN. ARE YOU PREPARED TO USE STARBUSTER?
DA. ONCE TROOPS IS CLEAR, WE DROP EGG.
OPTICS, ANY CHANCE OF SCANNING THE SAND SEA FOR DOWNED TRANSPORT?
NEGATIVE, DATA COM ONE.


THE SAND SEA OF BURANA. TWO DAYS AGO HERE, THE ALLIANCE SUFFERED ITS MOST CRUSHING DEFEAT SINCE THE RIM BATTLE MASSACRE.
THE NIGHTMARE MACHINES OF THE ENEMY STILL PICK OVER THE BONES OF THE FALLEN LIKE SOME SCAVENGER FEEDING ON THE DEAD.
NOWR, SARGE?
NOT NOW.
10·019·JOE
WAIT FOR THE SIGNAL, POMRU.
HE'S SEEN YA, SARGE.
ACCORDING TO PLAN, POMRU.
WAIT FOR IT.
NOWR?
KLIK!
KLIK
NOW!
SHWOMP!

HE RISES LIKE ARMORED VENGEANCE FROM THE SANDY GRAVE THAT HOLDS SO MANY OF HIS FELLOWS.
ROBOSOLDIER, DYNAMO CLASS; 70 FT. TALL, 120 TONS, BUILT IN HUMANOID CONFIGURATION TO FIGHT IN A VARIETY OF TERRAINS, IT IS THE GRUNT OF THE ORION WAR, THE COMMON G.I. WHO CARRIES OUT THE PLANS AND SCHEMES OF THE HIGH COMMAND, FIGHTING AND DYING AND RARELY KNOWING WHY.
WATCH YOUR AZIMUTH, POMRU! ADJUST AND ALIGN!
NOW FIRE, FIRE, FIRE!
TO COMMAND, THIS BATTLESUIT IS JUST ANOTHER NUMBER, BUT TO ITS TWO MAN CREW THIS IS... DYNAMO JOE!
ROGER-DOKEY, SARGE!
ZZZSCHRAK!
KEEEEEE!


TAKEN BY SURPRISE, SLICED VIRTUALLY IN TWO, THE ENEMY WAR MACHINE GOES DEAD AND DISINTEGRATES. FOR A MOMENT, THERE IS NO SOUND BUT THE SIGHING OF SAND AND WIND.
KERNK!
HOWRZ, THAT SARGE? PRETTY SPIFFY, HUH?
A DISGRACE, POMRU, BY IMPERIUM STANDARDS.
BUT FOR A TAVITAN? SPLENDID!
"NOW LET'S GET OVER TO THE STAGING AREA BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE."
Rrrrrroar!

SARGE, THAT ISN'T...?
AFRAID SO, POMRU. THAT'LL BE THE LAST WHALE OUT.

THUFFERIN' MACINTOSH! THAT MEAN WE'RE TRAPPED BEHIND ENEMY LINES!

BACK IN THE SUIT, POMRU.
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN FIND ANYONE ELSE... WHILE WE CAN.

NEXT: THE
EGG!